

Page 11, after line 5, insert the following paragraph:

9y --The catch element 18 extends along, and adjacent, the head guiding duct 13 in the direction in which the components 12 are fed through the feed duct 11, with the first end portion 21 being urged by the spring 39 into the head guiding duct 13. A stop surface 49 is formed on the connecting member 4 and is located to engage the second end portion 48 of the catch element 18 to limit the distance in which the first end portion 21 is urged into the head guiding duct 13.--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please rewrite claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13, as follows:

Sub B27  
Q  
5  
1. (amended) ~~[Conveyor]~~ A conveyor for elongate components (12) designed with a head (41) and a shank (42), with a feed arrangement (7), for feeding the components in a prescribed direction, comprising a transfer arrangement (8) with a transfer region (15) in which a feed duct (11) comprising a head guiding duct (13) and a shank guiding duct (14) [passes into] is in communication with a conveying duct (16) in which a component (12) can be positioned, characterized by [a] the transfer arrangement (8) which comprises: [a catch unit (17) having at least one catch element (18) which is arranged opposite the shank guiding duct (14), penetrates at least partially into the head guiding duct (13) and can be deflected from the head guiding duct (13) against a spring force]

at least one catch element (18) having a first end portion (21) and a second end portion (46) spaced from the first end portion;

the at least one catch element (18) being mounted for movement;

the at least one catch element (18) extending along, and adjacent, the head guiding duct (13) generally in the prescribed direction of the feeding of the components (12); and

a biasing element (39) positioned to urge the at least one catch element (18) into the head guiding duct (13).

Sub B39  
7. (amended) [Conveyor] The conveyor according to claim 1, [2 or 3,] characterized in that the at least one catch element (18) is [articulated] movable pivotally [round] around an axis (38) and [at least one spring] the biasing element (39) acts on the at least one catch element [(18)].

8. (amended) [Conveyor] The conveyor according to claim 7, characterized in that [spring] the biasing element (39) is a compression spring which is arranged to engage the at least one catch element (18) between the axis (38) and the first end portion (21) of the at least one catch element [(18)].

9. (amended) [Conveyor according to one of claims 1 to 8,] The conveyor according to claim 1, characterized in that the transfer arrangement (8) comprises two relatively displaceable positioning segments (9, 10), the positioning segments (9, 10) defining a recess (24) through which a component (12) can be introduced into the conveying duct (16).

10. (amended) [Conveyor] The conveyor according to claim 9, characterized in that the transfer arrangement (8) further comprises biasing elements (27, 28) for urging respectively the positioning segments (9, 10) [are displaceable against a spring force] together and allowing displacement thereof against the urging of the biasing elements (27, 28).

9,  
13. (amended) [Conveyor] The conveyor according to [one of the claims] claim 9, [to 12,] characterized in that [each] the positioning segments (9, 10) [can assume an end position in which the positioning segments (9, 10)] are structured to form a [portion] continuation of the feed duct (11) between at least the feed duct (11) and the transfer region (15).

Please amend claims 2, 11, 12 and 14, as follows:

Claim 2, line 1, after "that" insert --the--;

Claim 11, line 1, cancel "Conveyor" and insert -The conveyor-;

Claim 11, line 1, after "9" insert --,--;

Claim 11, line 1, cancel "or 10,";

Claim 12, line 1, cancel "Conveyor" and insert -The conveyor-;

Claim 12, line 1, cancel "10 or 11,";

Claim 14, line 1, cancel "Conveyor according to one of the claims" and insert -The conveyor according to claims 1 or 9-;

Claim 14, line 1, cancel "to 13,".

Cancel claims 3, 4, 5 and 6 in their entirety and without prejudice.

Add new claims 15 through 28, as follows:

Sub B4)  
15. The conveyor according to claim 1, characterized in that a stop surface (47) is positioned for engagement with the second end portion (46) of the at least one catch element (18) to limit the distance in which the first end portion (21) is urged into the head guiding duct (13).

16. A conveyor for elongate components (12) designed with a head (41) and a shank (42), with a feed arrangement (7), for feeding the components in a prescribed direction, comprising a transfer arrangement (8) with a transfer region (15) in which a feed duct (11) comprising a head guiding duct (13) and a shank guiding duct (14) is in communication with a conveying duct (16) in which a component (12) can be positioned, characterized by the transfer arrangement (8) which comprises:

two relatively displaceable positioning segments (9, 10) defining a recess (24) through which a component (12) can be introduced into the conveying duct (16).

17. The conveyor according to claim 16, characterized in that the transfer arrangement (8) further comprises biasing elements (27, 28) for urging respectively the positioning segments (9, 10) together and allowing displacement thereof against the urging of the biasing elements (27, 28).

18. The conveyor according to claim 16, characterized in that each positioning segment (9, 10) is pivotal around a respective pivot axis (25, 26).

19. The conveyor according to claim 16, characterized in that the positioning segments (9, 10) form a feed path for the component (12) which substantially corresponds to the cross section of the feed duct (11).

20. The conveyor according claim 16, characterized in that the positioning segments (9, 10) are structured to form a continuation of the feed duct (11) between at least the feed duct (11) and the transfer region (15).

21. The conveyor according to claims 16, characterized in that the conveying duct (16) comprises:

a split sleeve (31) formed by at least two segments and having a first end portion (34) adjacent the transfer region (15) and a second end portion (35) remote from the transfer region (15);

at least one resilient element (36) arranged on the second end portion (35) of the split sleeve (31) to compliantly retain the two segments of the split sleeve (31) in assembly;

the cross section of the split sleeve (31) tapering conically substantially and inwardly from the first end portion (34) to the second end portion (35); and

at least portions of the two segments of the split sleeve (31) being expandable from each other against the action of the at least one resilient element (36).

22. The conveyor according to claim 16, characterized in that the transfer arrangement (8) comprises:

at least one catch element (18) located adjacent an extended length of the head guiding duct (13);

a portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being extendable into the head guiding duct (13);

means for developing an urging force to maintain the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) normally within the head guiding duct (13); and

the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being composed of a material whereby the portion (21) is deflectable from the head guiding duct (13) against the urging force.

23. The conveyor according to claim 21, characterized in that the transfer arrangement comprises:

at least one catch element (18) located adjacent an extended length of the head guiding duct (13);

a portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being extendable into the head guiding duct (13);

means for developing an urging force to maintain the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) normally within the head guiding duct (13); and

the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being composed of a material which allows the portion (21) to be deflected from the head guiding duct (13) against the urging force.

24. A conveyor for elongate components (12) designed with a head (41) and a shank (42), with a feed arrangement (7), for feeding the components in a prescribed direction, comprising a transfer arrangement (8) with a transfer region (15) in which a feed duct (11) comprising a head guiding duct (13) and a shank guiding duct (14) is in communication with a conveying duct (16) in which a component (12) can be positioned, characterized in that the conveying duct (16) comprises: